

# Letter from the Interim Executive Director 2016–2017: A Year of Change

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Dear Friends,

The Arizona Historical Society's stock-in-trade is memorializing the changes evidenced through time. We typically focus on events and people outside of our own institution. But we are not impervious to change inside of our agency. We constantly change. And this most recent year is reflective of the change.

We changed our collections through accessions as well as de-accessions. The Arizona Heritage Center in Tempe accessioned over 250 artifacts into their collections. Likewise hundreds of artifacts, vetted by the AHS State Board Collections Committee, were de-accessioned. The Arizona History Museum in Tucson likewise added to its collections through a donation from the January 8th Memorial Foundation. The Foundation held the artifacts that resulted from the tragic shootings of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, her staff and citizens in 2011. The Arizona History Museum will use the collection to help foster civic engagement.

We changed our museums by replacing old exhibits with new. After a very successful remodel of the Sanguinetti House Museum exhibits in Yuma last year, the Rio Colorado Division has recently reopened the Sanguinetti House with a new exhibit: *River Lore – Tales from the Narrows*. According to Yanna Kruse, Rio Colorado Division Director, the *River Lore* exhibit is "a product of cooperation among AHS staff." Staff from our other divisions willingly and generously brought their talents together with the local staff and volunteers in Yuma to make this exhibit a success. Earlier this year, Flagstaff Mayor Coral Evans successfully opened *Todos Unidos: The Hispanic Experience in Flagstaff* for the Pioneer Museum, and *Todos Unidos: Los Chantes* opened at Riordan Mansion. Also in 2017, *History Lab* opened at the Arizona History Museum, and *Footprints on the Desert: Frank Lloyd Wright in Arizona* was one of several exhibits that opened at the Arizona Heritage Center.

We changed our programming to enlighten and entertain our audiences. In Yuma, AHS Board member Bruce Gwynn and Yuma Archivist Laurie Boone created a lecture series focusing on Arizona history and heritage. The series featured Board members Greg Scott and Doug Hocking, as well as AHS Archivist Rebekah Tabah Percival. Library and Archives Director Susan Irwin coordinated Arizona's National History Day competitors to their best showing ever, a multiple award-winning effort. Los Amigos, a volunteer support organization of the Arizona

History Museum, held a very successful "History on Tap" evening fundraiser. The Pioneer Museum debuted Cuseum, their new mobile app, and Rio Colorado's Ghost Trolley Tour was named one of the top ten things to do in Arizona. The Arizona Heritage Center offered multiple lecture series associated with each of their changing exhibits, with topics ranging from geology to sustainable architecture to the early history of Phoenix.

That's just a small cross section of the many changes that we've undergone this past year. But the biggest changes may have come in our staff. Library and Archives lost three key members; Lizeth Zepeda, Caitlin Lampman, and former Division Director Linda Whitaker all moved on to other life opportunities. Liz and Caitlin went to University positions and Linda to retirement. Linda's contributions during her time with us were extraordinary. We thank her.

Like Linda, the lure of retirement was irresistible to other key members of our family. Yolanda South, our Human Resource Officer, was with AHS for almost 40 years. She was an extremely invaluable team member that guided us through the ever-changing structure of personnel policies. Yolanda's first position was in Publications, which is where our next retiree resided for 31 years. As Director of AHS Publications, Bruce Dinges published award-winning books and 125 issues of *The Journal of Arizona History*, and was the Executive Director of the Arizona History Convention, all while balancing his work life with cycling excursions around Tucson and the world. Bruce was our resident historian and voice of considered reason. No one appreciated Bruce more than Anne Woosley, our recently retired Executive Director who is now our *Director Emeritus*; a title of distinction the Board of Directors bestowed on her to acknowledge her 16 years of unparalleled service. She made us more professional. She made us better. She made us change.

This has been a year of change on all levels. But change is inevitable. As our former colleagues have left our everyday lives, we look forward to the new colleagues that will take AHS into the future. We will embrace the change and become better.



William L. Ponder  
Interim Executive Director

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## Staff & Interns AS OF JUNE 30, 2017

Dr. Anne I. Woosley  
*Executive Director*

William L. Ponder  
*Chief Administrative Officer*

Yolanda Z. South  
*Administrative Services Officer*

Valerie M. Shanahan  
*Executive Assistant*

Yanna L. Kruse  
*Rio Colorado Division Director*

Dr. William D. Peterson  
*Northern Arizona Division Director*

Tawn M. Downs  
*Central Arizona Division Director*

Leslie R. Roe  
*Southern Arizona Division Director*

Dr. Bruce J. Dinges  
*Publications Division Director*

Susan M. Irwin  
*Library & Archives Division Director*

Julia Arriola  
Kim Bittrich  
Nicola Brownlee  
Doreen Crowe  
Melba Davis  
John DeGraff  
Kate Fitzpatrick  
Janelle Gintz  
Eric Gonzales  
Roy Goodman  
Michael Goodwin

Jill Hough  
Laraine Daly Jones  
Brandi Klein  
Nikki Lober  
Elyssa Marley  
Debbie McKinion  
Joe Meehan  
Peter Mueller-Martin  
Emily Orzel  
Rebekah Tabah  
Percival

Jan Persidskis  
Dennis Rogers  
Mary Ann Ruelas  
Sacha Siskonen  
Ashley Smith  
Breann Velasco  
Marica Whittemore  
Lizeth Zepeda